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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 754

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JULY 12

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF. A. SAIGON 346
B. STATE 4566

1. [redacted] JULY 11 TOLD [redacted] THAT IN ALL PROBABILITY THERE WILL BE NO REP NO EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF UBA. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION, [redacted] ALSO SAID THERE SOME DOUBT THAT CONGRESS WILL BE HELD, BUT HE ADDED THAT INVITATIONS ALREADY SENT OUT.

PAGE 2 RUMJTP 754/1 C O N F I D E N T I A L
2. ACCORDING BOTH [redacted] CONGRESS WOULD BE COMPOSED OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF EACH PROVINCIAL BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION. THIS IS DIFFERENT FORMULA THAN THAT USED IN LAST CONGRESS WHEN TAM CHAU THREAT TO RESIGN WON HIM VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. CONTRARY HIS EARLIER STATEMENT REPORTED REFERENCE A, [redacted] SAID IT IS NOT REP NOT CERTAIN THAT TAM CHAU CAN CONTROL CONGRESS AND THIS IS REASON HE HAS ADVISED TAM CHAU AGAINST CONVENING IT, THOUGH HO GIAC DID NOT SAY SO DIRECTLY. [redacted] GOT IMPRESSION THAT CONGRESS COMPOSED AS ABOVE WOULD BE STACKED AGAINST TAM CHAU.

3. [redacted] SAID THAT IF CONGRESS IS HELD, IT WILL DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO CONTINUE STRUGGLE AND WILL ALSO CHOOSE NEW LEADERSHIP. HE SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT NEW LEADER WOULD BE CHOSEN REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT STRUGGLE CONTINUED.

4. [redacted] SAID THAT HE HAS ADVISED HAGPCHAKLO WITHDRAW, BUT NOT REP NOT RESIGN, FOR TWO OR THREE MONTHS, LEAVING ORGANIZATION IN HANDS OF THICH THIEN HOA. WHEN [redacted] ASKED IF THIEN HOA IS NOT SECOND

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Ingberg DATE 10/6/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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PAGE 3 RUMJIP 754/1 C O N F I D E N T I A L
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF INSTITUTE (HARD LINER PHAP TRI IS FIRST DEPUTY). [redacted] SAID THAT PLACING INSTITUTE TEMPORARILY UNDER THIEN HOA WOULD REQUIRE CONCURRENCE OF INSTITUTE COUNCIL, BUT WOULD NOT DEMAND SPECIAL CONGRESS. [redacted] SAID THAT THIEN HOA IS UNKNOWN QUANTITY IN THAT HE HAS SOMETIMES TAKEN EXTREMIST POSITION, SOMETIMES FAVORED MODERATES. ASKED WHAT LINE THIEN HOA LIKELY TAKE NOW IF HE IN CHARGE, [redacted] SIMPLY SHRUGGED.

5. WHEN [redacted] ASKED IF WITHDRAWAL OF TAM CHAU WOULD NOT LEAVE TRI QUANG AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN CONTROL OF INSTITUTE, [redacted] SAID THAT HE HOPES TRI QUANG WILL ALSO WITHDRAW, PERHAPS GOING TO CEYLON FOR STUDY. HE SAID HE HAD NO BUT NO REASON TO BELIEVE TRI QUANG IN FACT CONSIDERING ANY SUCH MOVE.

6. [redacted] SAID THAT TAM CHAU NOW VERY DISCOURAGED AND SICK. MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT TAM CHAU UNABLE SECURE RELEASE OF ALL MONKS UNDER DETENTION. ACCORDING [redacted] ABOUT 50 STILL BEING HELD. [redacted] HOWEVER CLAIMS THOUSANDS OF BUDDHISTS STILL IN JAIL, SPECIFICALLY

PAGE 4 RUMJIP 754/1 C O N F I D E N T I A L
MENTIONED [redacted] AS AMONG THOSE WHOM GVN REFUSES TO FREE.) [redacted] SAID THAT TAM CHAU FAILURE GET ALL MONKS RELEASED HAS COST HIM THE CONFIDENCE OF BUDDHIST INSTITUTE, PARTICULARLY AS SOME ARE SAYING THAT MONKS STILL IN JAIL ARE THERE BECAUSE TAM CHAU PREFERS THAT THEY NOT BE RELEASED.

7. [redacted] LOOK LINE THAT IN PROVINCES MANY ANTI-BUDDHIST GROUPS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SITUATION TO TAKE REVENGE ON BUDDHISTS. HE SAID RESULT ISOLY PEOPLE ANGRY WITH GVN AND SITUATION IS CALM ON SURFACE ONLY. HE SAID BUDDHIST PEOPLE BLAME US FOR THEIR TROUBLES BECAUSE US SUPPORTS GVN GOVERNMENT. EMBOFF SAID (AGAIN) THAT US NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY BUDDHIST DIFFICULTIES, WILL NOT INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF EITHER PARTY, HOPES THEY CAN SETTLE PROBLEMS BY DIRECT TALKS AMONG LEADERS, AND THAT US WORKS THROUGH DULY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT.

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8. [redacted] SOFTENED ABOVE HARD LINE CONSIDERABLY BY SAYING THAT INSTITUTE NOT REPEAT NOT NOW DEMANDING RESIGNATION OF THIEU AND KY, BUT ONLY STRUGGLING

PAGE 5 RUMJIR 754/1 C O N F I D E N T I A L
FOR RELEASE OF BUDDHISTS NOW IN JAIL. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE KY APPROVES OF "REVENGE" AGAINST BUDDHISTS. [redacted] SUGGESTED THAT BEST WAY SETTLE PROBLEM IN THAT CASE WOULD BE TO GIVE KY EVIDENCE OF "REVENGE" AND ASK FOR HIS HELP.
[redacted] SAID HE HAS URGED THIS COURSE ON TAM CHAU.

9. [redacted] COMMENTED THAT HE HAD HEARD OF NO REPT NO "REVENGE" AGAINST BUDDHISTS UNLESS MINH QUI MEANT PUNISHMENT OF FIVE GENERALS. [redacted] BRUSHED GENERALS ASIDE, ASSERTED THAT HE CERTAIN "REVENGE" TAKING PLACE IN COUNTRYSIDE. EMBOFF REPEATED IDEA THAT ANY EVIDENCE SUCH REVENGE SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO KY'S ATTENTION. LODGE
RT

NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA, 7/12/66, 3:30 A.M.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 754

1966 JUL 12 AM 2 45

JULY 12

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

10. ALSO ASKED BOTH ABOUT JULY 10 REPORT IN CHANH DAO THAT THICH PHAP TRI ATTENDING MEETINGS OF FATHER HOANG QUYNH'S FRONT OF ALL RELIGIONS AS OFFICIAL INSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVE. SAID THAT FRONT HAD TOLD INSTITUTE LEADERS THEY REPRESENTING THEIR RELIGIONS AND THEY ALL AGREED ON OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS. THEY ASKED FOR

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 754/2 C O N F I D E N T I A L
INSTITUTE SUPPORT. SAID INSTITUTE REPLY WAS THAT IF FRONT INDEED REPRESENTS CATHOLIC AND OTHER LEADERSHIP AS CLAIMED, INSTITUTE WOULD SUPPORT IT. HOWEVER, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IN FACT FATHER HOANG QUYNH DOES NOT SPEAK FOR CATHOLICS AND HAS LOST CONTROL OF HIS OWN ORGANIZATION. TAM CHAU DISAPPROVES OF PHAP TRI ACTION, AND PHAP TRI DID NOT RPT NOT "TRULY" REPRESENT INSTITUTE IN MEETINGS WITH FRONT. EXPRESSED FEAR THAT ASSOCIATION WITH FRONT CAN ONLY WEAKEN AND DIVIDE INSTITUTE. MERELY DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF PHAP TRI'S ACTIONS ON GROUNDS THAT HE HIMSELF NOT INVOLVED IN POLITICS.

11. EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT TRI QUANG'S CONDITION, SAID THAT HE LIKELY DIE IF FAST NOT SOON STOPPED. HE SAID ONLY SPECIAL SERUM PREPARED BY DOCTOR LE KHAC QUYEN HAS KEPT TRI QUANG ALIVE SO FAR. HOWEVER, SAID THAT HE SAW TRI QUANG JULY 9 AND TRI QUANG

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-2- SAIGON 754, JULY 12, (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

"VERY STRONG". OBSERVED MATTER OF FACTLY THAT TRI QUANG TAKING GLUCOSE AND IN NO DANGER. HE SAID BUDDHIST RELIGION GIVES GREAT HONOR TO THOSE WHO

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 754/2 C O N F I D E N T I A L
SACRIFICE THEMSELVES TO DEFEND RELIGION OR TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING OF OTHERS, BUT FASTING AND IMMOLATIONS WHICH MERELY AIM AT FORCING RESIGNATION OF GOVERNMENT ARE CONTRARY TO BUDDHIST DOCTRINE. GIAC ADDED THAT TRI QUANG VERY PROUD MAN AND SUCH PRIDE IS DANGEROUS.

12. SAID THICH THIEN MINH IS STILL QUITE WEAK AND MUST STAY IN BED. HE RECEIVES VISITORS AND TALKS WITH THEM, BUT HE IS TOO WEAK TO SAY MUCH. USUALLY RELIABLE SAID THAT AS OF JUNE 29 MINH IN VERY POOR CONDITION AND ABLE SPEAK ONLY WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY. HE UNABLE MOVE WITHOUT ASSISTANCE AT THAT TIME AND NEWSPAPER REPORTS STATED HE WOULD BE HOSPITALIZED FOR SIX MONTHS. THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE ACCURATE ESTIMATE.

13. COMMENT: (A) ABOVE PROVIDES ANSWERS TO SOME OF QUERIES IN REFERENCE B. FOLLOWING IS MORE DIRECT ANSWER: IN ABSENCE TRI QUANG AND THIEN MINH, MILITANTS MOST LIKELY BE DIRECTED BY PHAP TRI IF AND WHEN CONGRESS HELD. PHAP TRI MOVE TOWARD HOANG QUYNH MAY BE READ AS EFFORT FIND ALLIES OUTSIDE INSTITUTE. IT COULD ALSO BE

PAGE 4 RUMJIR 754/2 C O N F I D E N T I A L
EFFORT TO EMBARRASS TAM CHAU, PHAP TRI MADE POINT OF NOTING THAT FRONT PRESS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD BEFORE UBA CONGRESS, AND HE MAY ALSO HOPE THAT ANTI-GVN STATEMENTS BY FRONT WILL INFLUENCE CONGRESS AGAINST TAM CHAU.

(B) PHAP TRI CAN PROBABLY COUNT ON SUPPORT OF MAN GIAC AND SEVERAL OTHER MONKS ON INSTITUTE COUNCIL. POSITION OF NUMBER LEADING MONKS SUCH AS MINH CHAU AND HUYEN QUANG IS UNCLEAR. SAID BOTH WOULD SUPPORT TAM CHAU, BUT WE INCLINED DOUBT THIS. WHILE THEY NOT LOYAL TO PHAP TRI, WHO HAS LITTLE OR NO PERSONAL FOLLOWING, THEY WOULD LIKELY CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO TRI QUANG EVEN IF HE DOES NOT ATTEND CONGRESS.

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(C) MONKS HAVE FREE ACCESS TO TRI QUANG AND HE COULD ATTEMPT MANIPULATE CONGRESS FROM DUY TAN CLINIC. MOREOVER, QUANG WOULD PROBABLY RELISH OPPORTUNITY TO REGAIN SPOTLIGHT BY DRAMATIC APPEARANCE, IN "WEAKENED CONDITION" AND STILL FASTING, AT CONGRESS. WE DOUBT GVN WOULD ATTEMPT PREVENT HIS ATTENDANCE, ESPECIALLY AS TAM CHAU WOULD PROBABLY BE OBLIGED DEMAND HIS "RELEASE".

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 754/2 C O N F I D E N T I A L

(D) KY HAS PROBABLY DONE ABOUT AS MUCH AS HE CAN TO CONCILIATE BUDDHISTS AND STRENGTHEN HAND OF TAM CHAU. HE HAS RELEASED GREAT MAJORITY OF THOSE HELD FOR PARTICIPATION IN ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. HE HAS ORDERED RENOVATION AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE OF PAGODAS IN DANANG AND THE VIEN HOA DAO HERE IN SAIGON. VIEN HOA DAO IN FACT NOW LOOKS MUCH BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE. FURTHER MOVES TOWARD BUDDHISTS LIKELY STIMULATE ALREADY RESTIVE CATHOLICS TO SOME REACTION.

(E) IN OUR JUDGMENT, FORMAL UBA SPLIT IS POSSIBLE BUT NOT PROBABLE. BOTH MODERATES AND MILITANTS SEEM TO HAVE KEEP APPRECIATION OF FACT THAT SUCH A SPLIT WOULD RENDER BUDDHISTS VIRTUALLY POWERLESS IN POLITICAL ARENA.

(F) WE ESTIMATE CHANCES ARE NOW AGAINST CONGRESS BEING HELD. TAM CHAU MAY "WITHDRAW" FOR SOME TIME, BUT SEEMS UNLIKELY HE WILL ABDICATE COMPLETELY OR FOR ANY EXTENDED PERIOD. MILITANTS LIKELY CONTINUE IN CONTROL OF INSTITUTE, BUT THEIR MEANS AND THEIR FIELD OF ACTION ARE NOW SO LIMITED THAT THEY PROBABLY CANNOT DO ANY SERIOUS DAMAGE. LODGE

NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA, 7/12/66, 3347 A.M.

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